

2.0 PROJECT NEED AND DESCRIPTION

Over the past five years, over 1,200 accidents have been reported in the project area. Over 34 percent of the accidents have involved injuries or death. A total of 20 fatalities occurred in the project area, with ten on U.S. 301 south of the C&D Canal. Several roadway segments on U.S. 301/S.R. 896 are on DelDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) list.

U.S. 301 currently operates as a regional truck route, bypassing the congestion and tolls of the I-95 corridor from Richmond, Virginia, to Wilmington, Delaware. As a result, U.S. 301 carries a high ratio of trucks. The mix of trucks with local traffic has affected roadway capacity, operations, and safety.

Significant population and housing growth in the area south of the C&D Canal between the Delaware-Maryland border and the S.R. 1/U.S. 13 corridor, coupled with increases in through and seasonal traffic, has resulted in worsened traffic congestion and decreased safety on the existing roadway system. Projections for continued significant growth forebode an ever-worsening situation in one of Delaware's most rapidly developing areas. At the same time, infrastructure improvements have failed to keep pace with development. Many of the major roadways in southern New Castle County are projected to operate at or below acceptable levels of service.

To meet the project needs – safety, truck traffic, and congestion – a range of alternatives both off and on alignment were developed and considered. All of the alternatives propose the construction of a four-lane limited access highway facility with adequate service roads for local property access and mobility. These alternatives are:

- Yellow Alternative – utilizing the existing U.S. 301 corridor to Mount Pleasant and utilizing the Boyds Corner Road corridor to S.R. 1 at Boyds Corner
- Orange Alternative – utilizing the existing U.S. 301 corridor to north of Mount Pleasant, then proposing a new alignment to S.R. 1 near the existing toll plaza
- Purple Alternative – proposing the new “ridge” alignment to north of Armstrong Corner, then utilizing the existing S.R. 896 (Boys Corner Road) corridor to SR 1 at Boyds Corner
- Brown Alternatives – proposing the new “ridge” alignment to Summit, then proposing a new alignment to S.R. 1 near the existing toll plaza
- Green Alternatives – proposing the new “ridge” alignment to north of Armstrong Corner, then proposing a new alignment to the northeast to S.R. 1 near the existing toll plaza
- Blue Alternatives – proposing new alignments to the east, either north or south of Townsend, to S.R. 1
- Red Alternative – proposing the new “ridge” alignment to south of Summit Bridge, then utilizing the existing S.R. 896 corridor north to the I-95/S.R. 896 interchange

The location and design features of these alternatives have been reviewed at length with the SHPO during consultation meeting throughout the project development effort.

Preliminary consideration of the alternatives indicated that the Red, Orange, and Blue Alternatives should not be retained for detailed study and further consideration. This recommendation was presented to the public and the regulatory and resources agencies. The remaining alternatives – Yellow, Purple, Brown, and Green – are retained and are currently undergoing detailed study and careful consideration which will be documented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, currently in preparation by FHWA and DelDOT.